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PETER RUGG.

PETER RUGG,

The Missing Man.

By WILLIAM AUSTIN.

With a Notice of the Author.

WORCESTER:
FRANKLIN P. RICE, *Publisher.*
MDCCCLXXXII.

WILLIAM AUSTIN.

THE AUTHOR of *Peter Rugg* was born in Charlestown, Mass., March 2, 1778. He was graduated at Harvard College in 1798. In 1801 he delivered at Charlestown, an oration on the anniversary of the Battle of Bunker's Hill, which was printed. He passed two or three years abroad, and published in 1804 his *Letters from London.* "The letters are written with ease and elegance, and show a sprightly inquisitive mind, with a strong flavor of what was called in that day 'Jacobinism,' in its judgments of affairs of church and state."

In 1805, in consequence of a misunderstanding growing out of a political contest, Austin engaged in a duel with James H. Elliott and was slightly wounded. The affair took place in Rhode Island, and Austin's second was Charles Pinckney Sumner, father of Charles Sumner.

In 1807, he published a volume in the Unitarian interest, entitled, *An Essay on the Human Character of Jesus Christ.* A Democrat in politics, it is somewhat remarkable that he should have identified himself with the religion of the other party. Some years later he contributed to the first number of the New England Magazine a paper entitled, *The Late Joseph Natterstrom.* These productions exhibit his varied talents and fine qualities as a writer.

Perhaps the most remarkable production of Austin's pen is the story of *Peter Rugg, the Missing Man.* It was written for the New England Galaxy, and has been reprinted many times. "It was," says Buckingham, "read more than any other communication that has fallen within my knowledge. It is purely fictitious, and originated in the inventive genius of its author." It belongs to that class of tales which have a common origin in the ancient legend of *The Wandering Jew.* Austin adapted his version to the quaint superstition of the New England of long ago.

William Austin maintained for many years a high position at the bar of Suffolk and Middlesex. He died at Charlestown, June 27, 1841.

PETER RUGG.

PETER RUGG,

The Missing Man.

FROM JONATHAN DUNWELL OF NEW YORK,

TO MR. HERMANN KRAUFF.

Sir,—Agreeable to my promise, I now relate to you all the particulars of the lost man and child, which I have been able to collect. It is entirely owing to the humane interest you seemed to take in the report, that I have pursued the inquiry to the following result.

You may remember that business called me to Boston in the summer of 1820. I sailed in the packet to Providence, and when I arrived there, I learned that every seat in the stage was engaged. I was thus obliged either to wait a few hours, or accept a seat with the driver, who civilly offered me that accomodation. Accordingly I took my seat by his side, and soon found him intelligent and communicative.

When we had travelled about ten miles, the horses suddenly threw their ears on their necks as flat as a hare's. Said the driver, "have you a surtout with you?" "No," said I, "why do you ask?" "You will want one soon," said he. "Do you observe the ears of all the horses?" "Yes, and was just about to ask the reason." "They see the storm breeder, and we shall see him soon." At this moment there was not a cloud visible in the firmament. Soon after a small speck appeared in the road. "There," said my companion, "comes the storm breeder; he always leaves a Scotch mist behind him. By many a wet jacket I do remember him. I suppose the poor fellow suffers much himself, much more than is known to the world." Presently a man with a child beside him, with a large black horse, and a weather-beaten chair, once built for a chaise body, passed in great haste, apparently at the rate of twelve miles an hour. He seemed to grasp the reins of his horse with firmness, and appeared to anticipate his speed. He seemed dejected, and looked anxiously at the passengers, particularly at the stage driver and myself. In a moment

after he passed us, the horses' ears were up, and bent themselves forward so that they nearly met. "Who is that man," said I, "he seems in great trouble." "Nobody knows who he is, but his person and the child are familiar to me. I have met him more than a hundred times, and have been so often asked the way to Boston by that man, even when he was travelling directly from that town, that of late I have refused any communication with him; and that is the reason he gave such a fixed look." "But does he never stop any where?" "I have never known him to stop any where longer than to inquire the way to Boston; and let him be where he may, he will tell you he cannot stay a moment, for he must reach Boston that night."

We were now ascending a high hill in Walpole; and as we had a fair view of the heavens I was rather disposed to jeer the driver for thinking of his surtout, as not a cloud as big as a marble could be discerned. "Do you look," said he, "in the direction whence the man came, that is the place to look; the storm never meets him, it follows him." We presently approached another hill, and when at

the height, the driver pointed out in an eastern direction a little black speck about as big as a hat. "There" said he "is the seed storm; we may possibly reach Polley's before it reaches us, but the wanderer and his child will go to Providence through rain, thunder and lightning." And now the horses, as though taught by instinct, hastened with increased speed. The little black cloud came on rolling over the turnpike, and doubled and trebled itself in all directions. The appearance of this cloud attracted the notice of all the passengers; for after it had spread itself to a great bulk, it suddenly became more limited in circumference, grew more compact, dark and consolidated. And now the successive flashes of chain lightning caused the whole cloud to appear like a sort of irregular net work, and displayed a thousand fantastic images. The driver bespoke my attention to a remarkable configuration in the cloud: he said every flash of lightning near its center discovered to him distinctly the form of a man sitting in an open carriage drawn by a black horse. But in truth, I saw no such thing. The man's fancy was doubtless at

fault. It is a very common thing for the imagination to paint for the senses, both in the visible and invisible world.

In the mean time the distant thunder gave notice of a shower at hand; and just as we reached Polley's tavern the rain poured down in torrents. It was soon over, the cloud passing in the direction of the turnpike towards Providence. In a few moments after a respectable looking man in a chaise stopped at the door. The man and child in the chair having excited some little sympathy among the passengers, the gentleman was asked if he had observed them. He said he had met them; that the man seemed bewildered, and inquired the way to Boston; that he was driving at great speed as though he expected to outstrip the tempest; that the moment he had passed him, a thunder-clap broke distinctly over the man's head, and seemed to envelope both man and child, horse and carriage. "I stopped," said the gentleman, "supposing the lightning had struck him, but the horse only seemed to loom up and increase his speed, and as well as I could judge he travelled just as fast as the thunder cloud." While this man

was speaking, a pedlar with a cart of tin merchandise came up, all dripping; and, on being questioned, he said he had met that man and carriage within a fortnight, in four different states; that at each time he had inquired the way to Boston, and that a thunder shower like the present, had each time deluged his wagon and his wares, setting his tin pots, &c. afloat, so that he had determined to get marine insurance done for the future. But that which excited his surprise most, was the strange conduct of his horse, for that long before he could distinguish the man in the chair, his own horse stood still in the road and flung back his ears. "In short," said the pedlar, "I wish never to see that man and horse again; they do not look to me as though they belonged to this world."

This was all I could learn at that time; and the occurrence soon after, would have become with me, like one of those things which had never happened, had I not, as I stood recently on the door-step of Bennett's hotel in Hartford, heard a man say, "there goes Peter Rugg and his child! he looks wet and weary, and farther from Boston than ever." I was

satisfied it was the same man I had seen more than three years before; for whoever has once seen Peter Rugg can never after be deceived as to his identity. "Peter Rugg!" said I, "and who is Peter Rugg?" "That" said the stranger, "is more than anyone can tell exactly. He is a famous traveller, held in light esteem by all innholders, for he never stops to eat, drink, or sleep. I wonder why the government does not employ him to carry the mail." "Aye," said a bystander, "that is a thought bright only on one side; how long would it take in that case to send a letter to Boston? Peter has already, to my knowledge been more than twenty years travelling to that place." "But," said I, "does the man never stop any where, does he never converse with any one? I saw the same man more than three years since, near Providence, and I heard a strange story about him. Pray sir give me some account of this man." "Sir," said the stranger, "those who know the most respecting that man, say the least. I have heard it asserted that heaven sometimes sets a mark on a man, either for judgment or a trial. Under which Peter Rugg now labours

I cannot say; therefore I am rather inclined to pity than to judge." "You speak like a humane man," said I, "and if you have known him so long, I pray you will give me some account of him. Has his appearance much altered?" "Why yes, he looks as though he never ate, drank, or slept; and his child looks older than himself, and he looks like time broke off from eternity and anxious to gain a resting place." "And how does his horse look?" said I. "As for his horse, he looks fatter and gayer, and shows more animation and courage than he did twenty years ago. The last time Rugg spoke to me he inquired how far it was to Boston. I told him just one hundred miles. 'Why' said he, 'how can you deceive me so? it is cruel to mislead a traveller. I have lost my way; pray direct me the nearest way to Boston.' I repeated it was one hundred miles. 'How can you say so?' said he, 'I was told last evening it was but fifty, and I have travelled all night.' 'But,' said I, 'you are now travelling from Boston. You must turn back.' 'Alas,' said he, 'it is all turn back! Boston shifts with the wind, and plays all around the compass.

One man tells me it is to the East, another to the West; and the guide posts too, they all point the wrong way.' 'But will you not stop and rest,' said I. 'You seem wet and weary.' 'Yes,' said he, 'it has been foul weather since I left home.' 'Stop then, and refresh yourself.' 'I must not stop, I must reach home to-night if possible, though I think you must be mistaken in the distance to Boston.' He then gave the reins to his horse, which he had restrained with difficulty, and disappeared in a moment. A few days afterwards I met the man a little this side of Claremont, winding around the hills in Unity, at the rate, I believe, of twelve miles an hour."

"Is Peter Rugg his real name, or has he accidentally gained that name?" "I know not, but presume he will not deny his name, you can ask him, for see, he has turned his horse and is passing this way." In a moment, a dark colored, high spirited horse approached, and would have passed without stopping, but I had resolved to speak to Peter Rugg, or whoever the man might be. Accordingly I stepped into the street, and as the horse

approached, I made a feint of stopping him. The man immediately reined in his horse. "Sir" said I, "may I be so bold as to inquire if you are not Mr. Rugg? for I think I have seen you before." "My name is Peter Rugg," said he, "I have unfortunately lost my way; I am wet and weary, and will take it kindly of you to direct me to Boston." "You live in Boston, do you, and in what street?" "In Middle Street." "When did you leave Boston?" "I cannot tell precisely; it seems a considerable time." "But how did you and your child become so wet? it has not rained here to-day." "It has just rained a heavy shower up the river. But I shall not reach Boston to-night if I tarry. Would you advise me to take the old road, or the turnpike?" "Why, the old road is one hundred and seventeen miles and the turnpike is ninty-seven." "How can you say so? you impose upon me; it is wrong to trifle with a traveller; you know it is but forty miles from Newburyport to Boston." "But this is not Newburyport; this is Hartford." "Do not deceive me sir. Is not this town Newburyport, and the river that I have been following, the Merrimac?" "No sir,

this is Hartford, and the river, the Connecticut." He wrung his hands and looked incredulous. "Have the rivers, too, changed their courses, as the cities have changed places? But see, the clouds are gathering in the south, and we shall have a rainy night. Ah, that fatal oath!" He would tarry no longer, his impatient horse leaped off, his hind flanks rising like wings, he seemed to devour all before him, and to scorn all behind.

I had now, as I thought, discovered a clue to the history of Peter Rugg, and I determined, the next time my business called me to Boston, to make a further inquiry. Soon after, I was enabled to collect the following particulars from Mrs. Croft, an aged lady in Middle Street, who has resided in Boston during the last twenty years. Her narration is this: The last summer a person, just at twilight, stopped at the door of the late Mrs. Rugg. Mrs. Croft on coming to the door, perceived a stranger, with a child by his side, in an old weather-beaten carriage, with a black horse. The stranger asked for Mrs. Rugg, and was informed that Mrs. Rugg had died at a good old age, more than twenty

years before that time. The stranger replied, "How can you deceive me so? do ask Mrs. Rugg to step to the door." "Sir, I assure you Mrs. Rugg has not lived here these nineteen years; no one lives here but myself, and my name is Betsey Croft." The stranger paused, and looked up and down the street, and said, "though the painting is rather faded this looks like my house." "Yes," said the child, "there is the stone before the door that I used to sit on to eat my bread and milk." "But," said the stranger, "it seems to be on the wrong side of the street. Indeed, everything here seems to be misplaced. The streets are all changed, the people are all changed, the town seems changed, and what is strangest of all, Catharine Rugg has deserted her husband and child. Pray," continued the stranger, "has John Foy come home from sea? he went a long voyage—he is my kinsman. If I could see him, he could give me some account of Mrs. Rugg." "Sir," said Mrs. Croft, "I never heard of John Foy. Where did he live?" "Just above here, in Orange Tree Lane." "There is no such place in this neighborhood." "What do you tell me!

Are the streets gone? Orange Tree Lane is at the head of Hanover Street, near Pemberton's hill." "There is no such lane now." "Madam! you cannot be serious. But you doubtless know my brother, William Rugg. He lives in Royal Exchange Lane, near King Street." "I know of no such lane; and I am sure there is no such street as King Street in this town." "No such street as King Street? Why, woman! you mock me. You may as well tell me there is no King George. However, madam, you see I am wet and weary. I must find a resting place. I will go to Hart's tavern near the market." "Which market, sir? for you seem perplexed; we have several markets." "You know there is but one market near the town dock." "O, the old market. But no one has kept there these twenty years."

Here the stranger seemed disconcerted, and muttered to himself audibly, "Strange mistake. How much this looks like Boston. It certainly has a great resemblance to it; but I perceive my mistake now. Some other Mrs. Rugg, some other Middle Street." Then said he, "madam, can you direct me to Boston?"

"Why this is Boston, the city of Boston. I know of no other Boston." "City of Boston it may be, but it is not the Boston where I live. I recollect now, I came over a bridge instead of a ferry. Pray what bridge is that I just came over?" "It is Charles River Bridge." "I perceive my mistake, there is a ferry between Boston and Charlestown, there is no bridge. Ah, I perceive my mistake. If I was in Boston, my horse would carry me directly to my own door. But my horse shows by his impatience that he is in a strange place. Absurd, that I should have mistaken this place for the old town of Boston! It is a much finer city than the town of Boston. It has been built long since Boston. I fancy it must lie at a distance from this city, as the good woman seems ignorant of it." At these words his horse began to chafe, and strike the pavement with his fore feet; the stranger seemed a little bewildered, and said "no home to-night," and giving the reins to his horse disappeared in the darkness.

It was evident that the generation to which Peter Rugg belonged had passed away.

This was all the account of Peter Rugg I could obtain from Mrs. Croft; but she directed me to an elderly man, Mr. James Felt, who lived near her, and who had kept a record of the principal occurrences for the last fifty years. At my request she sent for him; and, after I had related to him the object of my inquiry, Mr. Felt told me he had known Rugg in his youth; that his disappearance had caused some surprise; but as it sometimes happens that men run away, sometimes to be rid of others, and sometimes to be rid of themselves; and Rugg took his child with him, and his own horse and chair; and as it did not appear that any creditors made a stir, the occurrence soon mingled itself in the stream of oblivion; and Rugg and his child, horse and chair, were soon forgotten. "It is true," said Mr. Felt, "sundry stories grew out of Rugg's affair, whether true or false I cannot tell; but stranger things have happened in my day, without even a newspaper notice." "Sir," said I, "Peter Rugg is now living. I have lately seen Peter Rugg and his child, horse and chair; therefore I pray you to relate to me all that you know or ever heard of

him." "Why, my friend," said James Felt, "that Peter Rugg is now a living man I will not deny; but that you have seen Peter Rugg and his child is impossible, if you mean a small child, for Jenny Rugg if living, must be at least—let me see—Boston massacre, 1770 —Jenny was about ten years old. Why sir, Jenny Rugg if living must be more than sixty years of age. That Peter Rugg is living is highly probable, as he was only ten years older than myself; and I was only eighty last March, and I am as likely to live twenty years as any man." Here I perceived that Mr. Felt was in his dotage, and I despaired of gaining any intelligence from him on which I could depend.

I took my leave of Mrs. Croft, and proceeded to my lodgings at the Marlborough Hotel.

If Peter Rugg, thought I, has been traveling since the Boston massacre, there is no reason why he should not travel to the end of time. If the present generation know little of him, the next will know less, and Peter and his child will have no hold on this world.

In the course of the evening, I related my adventure in Middle Street. "Ha," said one of the company, smiling, "do you really think you have seen Peter Rugg? I have heard my grandfather speak of him as though he seriously believed his own story." "Sir," said I, "pray let us compare your grandfather's story of Mr. Rugg with my own." "Peter Rugg, sir, if my grandfather was worthy of credit, once lived in Middle Street in this city. He was a man in comfortable circumstances, had a wife and one daughter, and was generally esteemed for his sober life and manners. But unhappily his temper at times, was altogether ungovernable, and then his language was terrible. In these fits of passion, if a door stood in his way he would never do less than kick a panel through. He would sometimes throw his heels over his head, and come down on his feet, uttering oaths in a circle; and thus in a rage, he was the first who performed a somerset, and did what others have since learned to do for merriment and money. Once, Rugg was seen to bite a tenpenny nail in halves. In those days, everybody, both men and boys wore wigs; and Peter at these moments of

violent passion would become so profane that his wig would rise up from his head. Some said it was on account of his terrible language; others accounted for it in a more philosophical way, and said it was caused by the expansion of his scalp, as violent passion we know will swell the veins and expand the head. While these fits were on him, Rugg had no respect for heaven or earth. Except this infirmity, all agreed that Rugg was a good sort of a man; for when his fits were over, nobody was so ready to commend a placid temper as Peter.

"It was late in autumn one morning, that Rugg in his own chair with a fine black horse, took his daughter and proceeded to Concord. On his return, a violent storm overtook him. At dark, he stopped in Menotomy, (now West Cambridge) at the door of a Mr. Cutter, a friend of his, who urged him to tarry over night. On Rugg's declining to stop Mr. Cutter urged him vehemently. 'Why, Mr. Rugg,' said he, 'the storm is overwhelming you; the night is exceeding dark; your little daughter will perish; you are in an open chair and the storm is increasing.' '*Let the storm*

increase,' said Rugg with a fearful oath, '*I will see home to-night in spite of the last tempest! or may I never see home.*' At these words he gave his whip to his high spirited horse, and disappeared in a moment. But Peter Rugg did not reach home that night, nor the next; nor, when he became a missing man, could he ever be traced beyond Mr. Cutter's in Menotomy. For a long time after, on every dark and stormy night, the wife of Peter Rugg would fancy she heard the crack of a whip, and the fleet tread of a horse, and the rattling of a carriage, passing her door. The neighbors too, heard the same noises, and some said they knew it was Rugg's horse; the tread on the pavement was perfectly familiar to them. This occurred so often, that at length the neighbors watched with lanterns, and saw the real Peter Rugg, with his horse and chair, and child sitting beside him, pass directly before his own door, his head turned towards his house, and himself making every effort to stop his horse, but in vain. The next day, the friends of Mrs. Rugg exerted themselves to find her husband and child. They inquired at every public house and stable in

town; but it did not appear that Rugg made any stay in Boston. No one, after Rugg had passed his own door, could give any account of him; though it was asserted by some that the clatter of Rugg's horse and carriage on the pavements shook the houses on both sides of the street. And this is credible, if indeed Rugg's horse and carriage did pass on that night. For at this day, in many of the streets, a loaded truck or team in passing will shake the houses like an earthquake. However, Rugg's neighbors never afterwards watched; some of them treated it as a delusion, and thought no more of it. Others of a different opinion, shook their heads and said nothing. Thus Rugg and his child, horse and chair, were soon forgotten; and probably many in this neighborhood never heard a word on the subject.

"There was indeed a rumor, that Rugg afterwards was seen in Connecticut, between Suffield and Hartford, passing through the country like a streak of chalk. This gave occasion to Rugg's friends to make further inquiry. But the more they inquired, the more they were baffled. If they heard of

Rugg one day in Connecticut, the next they heard of him winding round the hills in New Hampshire; and soon after, a man in a chair, with a small child, exactly answering the description of Peter Rugg, would be seen in Rhode Island, inquiring the way to Boston.

"But that which chiefly gave a color of mystery to the story of Peter Rugg, was the affair at Charlestown Bridge. The toll gatherer asserted that sometimes, on the darkest and most stormy nights, when no object could be discerned, about the time Rugg was missing, a horse and wheel carriage, with a noise equal to a troop, would at midnight in utter contempt of the rates of toll, pass over the bridge. This occurred so frequently that the toll gatherer resolved to attempt a discovery. Soon after, at the usual time, apparently the same horse and carriage approached the bridge from Charlestown square. The toll gatherer, prepared, took his stand as near the middle of the bridge as he dared, with a large three-legged stool in his hand. As the appearance passed, he threw the stool at the horse, but heard nothing except the noise of the stool skipping across the bridge. The

toll gatherer on the next day asserted that the stool went directly through the body of the horse, and he persisted in that belief ever after. Whether Rugg, or whoever the person was, ever passed the bridge again, the toll gatherer would never tell; and when questioned seemed anxious to waive the subject. And thus Peter Rugg and his child, horse and carriage, remain a mystery to this day."

This, sir, is all that I could learn of Peter Rugg in Boston.

FURTHER ACCOUNT OF PETER RUGG.

BY JONATHAN DUNWELL.

In the autumn of 1825, I attended the races at Richmond in Virginia; as two new horses of great promise were run, the race-ground was never better attended, nor was expectation ever more deeply excited. The partizans of Dart and Lightning, the two race horses were equally anxious, and equally dubious of the result. To an indifferent spectator it was impossible to perceive any differ-

ence. They were equally beautiful to behold, alike in color and height, and as they stood side by side, they measured from heel to fore feet within half an inch of each other. The eyes of each were full, prominent and resolute, and when at times they regarded each other, they assumed a lofty demeanor, seemed to shorten their necks, project their eyes, and rest their bodies equally on their four hoofs. They certainly discovered signs of intelligence, and displayed a courtesy to each other, unusual even with statesmen. It was now nearly 12 o'clock, the hour of expectation, doubt and anxiety. The riders mounted their horses; and so trim, light and airy they sat on the animals, they seemed a part of them. The spectators, many deep, in a solid column, had taken their places; and as many thousand breathing statues were there as spectators. All eyes were turned to Dart and Lightning and their riders. There was nothing to disturb this calm except a busy woodpecker on a neighboring tree. The signal was given and Dart and Lightning answered with ready intelligence. At first they proceed at a slow trot, then they quicken

into a canter and then into a run. Presently they sweep the plain; both horses lay themselves flat to the ground, their riders bending forward and resting their chins between their horses' ears. Had not the ground been perfectly level, had there been any undulation, the least rise and fall, the spectator would have lost sight of both horses and riders. But while these horses, side by side, thus appeared, flying without wings, flat as a hare, and neither gained on the other, all eyes were diverted to a new spectacle. Directly in the rear of Dart and Lightning, a majestic black horse of unusual size, drawing an old weather beaten chair, strode over the plain; and although he appeared to make no effort, for he maintained a steady trot, before Dart and Lightning approached the goal, the black horse and chair had overtaken the racers, who, on perceiving this new competitor pass them, threw back their ears and suddenly stopped in their course. Thus neither Dart nor Lightning carried away the purse. The spectators now were exceedingly curious to learn whence came the black horse and chair. With many it was the opinion that nobody

was in the vehicle. Indeed this began to be the prevalent opinion, for those at a short distance, so fleet was the horse, could not easily discern who, if any body was in the carriage. But both the riders, whom the black horse passed very nearly, agreed in this particular, that a sad looking man with a little girl was in the chair. When they stated this I was satisfied it was Peter Rugg. But what caused no little surprise, John Spring, one of the riders, he who rode Lightning, asserted that no earthly horse, without breaking his trot, could in a carriage outstrip his race horse; and he persisted with some passion that it was not a horse, but a large black ox. "What a great black ox can do," said John, "I cannot pretend to say; but no race horse, not even Flying Childers, could out-trot Lightning in a fair race."

This opinion of John Spring excited no little merriment, for it was clear to every one that it was a powerful black horse that had interupted the race; but John Spring, jealous of Lightning's reputation as a horse, would rather have it thought that any other beast, even an ox, had been the victor. However,

the horse-laugh at John Spring's expense was soon suppressed; for as soon as Dart and Lightning began to breathe more freely, it was observed that both of them walked deliberately to the track of the race ground, and putting their heads to the earth, suddenly raised them and began to snort. John Spring said "the horses have discovered something strange; they suspect foul play. Let me go and talk with Lightning." He went to Lightning and took hold of his mane, and Lightning put his nose to the ground and smelt of the earth without touching it, and then reared his head very high and snorted so loudly that the sound echoed from the next hill. Dart did the same. Spring stooped down to examine the spot. In a second he raised himself up, and the countenance of the man was changed; his strength failed him, and he sidled against Lightning. When he recovered he exclaimed "it was an ox! I told you it was an ox. No real horse could beat Lightning." And now on a close inspection of the black horse's tracks in the path, it was evident to every one that the fore feet were cloven. Notwithstanding these appearances,

to me it was evident that the strange horse was in reality a horse. Yet when the people left the race ground, I presume one half would have testified that a large black ox had distanced two of the fleetest coursers that ever trod the Virginia turf. So uncertain are all things called historical facts.

While I was proceeding to my lodgings, pondering on the events of the day, a stranger rode up to me and accosted me thus, "I think your name is Dunwell, sir?" "Yes sir," I replied. "Did I not see you a year or two since in Boston, at the Marlborough Hotel?" "Very likely sir, for I was there." "And you heard a story about one Peter Rugg?" "I recollect it all," said I. "The account you heard in Boston must be true, for here he was to-day. The man has found his way to Virginia, and for aught that appears, has been to Cape Horn. I have seen him before to-day, but never saw him travel with such fearful velocity. Pray sir, where does Peter Rugg spend his winters? for I have seen him only in summer, and always in foul weather, except at this time." I replied, "no one knows where Peter Rugg spends his winters; where he

eats, drinks or lodges. He seems to have an indistinct idea of day and night, time and space, storm and sunshine. His only object is Boston. It appears to me that Rugg's horse has some control of the chair; and that Rugg himself is in some sort under the control of his horse." I then inquired of the stranger where he first saw the man and horse. "Why sir," said he, "In the summer of 1824 I travelled to the North for my health, and soon after I saw you at the Marlborough Hotel, I returned homeward to Virginia, and, if my memory is correct, I saw this man and horse in every state between here and Massachusetts. Sometimes he would meet me, but oftener overtake me. He never spoke but once, and that once was in Delaware. On his approach he checked his horse with some difficulty. A more beautiful horse I never saw: his hide was as fair and rotund and glossy as the skin of a Congo beauty. When Rugg's horse approached mine, he reined in his neck, bent his ears forward until they met, and looked my horse full in the face. My horse immediately withered into half a horse; his hide curled up like a piece

of burnt leather, spell bound, he was fixed to the earth as though a nail had been driven through each hoof. 'Sir,' said Rugg, 'perhaps you are travelling to Boston, and if so, I should be happy to accompany you for I have lost my way, and I must reach home to-night. See how sleepy this little girl looks; poor thing, she is a picture of patience.' 'Sir,' said I, 'it is impossible for you to reach home to-night, for you are in Concord in the County of Sussex, in the State of Delaware.' 'What do you mean,' said he, 'by state of Delaware? If I was in Concord, that is only twenty miles from Boston, and my horse Lightfoot could carry me to Charlestown ferry in less than two hours. You mistake sir, you are a stranger here, this town is nothing like Concord. I am well acquainted with Concord. I went to Concord when I left Boston.' 'But,' said I, 'you are in Concord in the State of Delaware.' 'What do you mean by state?' said Rugg. 'Why one of the United States.' 'States,' said he in a low voice, 'the man is a wag, and would persuade me that I am in Holland.' Then raising his voice, he said 'you seem to be a gentleman, and I entreat

you not to mislead me; tell me quickly, for pity's sake, the right road to Boston, for you see my horse will swallow his bitts, for he has eaten nothing since I left Concord.' 'Sir,' said I, 'this town is Concord, Concord in Delaware, not Concord in Massachusetts; and you are now five hundred miles from Boston.' Rugg looked at me for a moment, more in sorrow than resentment, and then repeated, 'five hundred miles! unhappy man! who would have thought that he was deranged! But nothing is so deceitful as appearances, in this world. Five hundred miles! this beats Connecticut River.' What he meant by Connecticut River, I know not. His horse broke away and he disappeared in a moment."

I explained to the stranger the meaning of Rugg's expression, "Connecticut River," and the incident at Hartford, as I stood at the door of Mr. Bennett's excellent hotel. We both agreed that the man we had seen that day was the true Peter Rugg.

Soon after, I saw Rugg again at the toll-gate on the turnpike between Alexandria and Middleburgh. While I was paying the toll, I observed to the toll-gatherer that the effects

of the drought were more severe in his vicinity than farther south. "Yes," said he, "the drought is excessive; but if I had not heard yesterday by a traveller, that the man with the black horse was seen in Kentucky a day or two since, I should be sure of a shower in a few minutes." I looked all around the horizon, and could not discern a cloud that could hold a pint of water. "Look, sir," said the toll-gatherer, "you perceive to the Eastward, just rising that hill a small black cloud not bigger than a black-berry, and while I am speaking it is doubling and trebling itself, and rolling up the turnpike steadily, as if its sole design was to deluge some object." "True," said I, "I do perceive it; but what connection is there between a thunder cloud and a man and a horse?" "More than you imagine, or I can tell you; but stop a moment, sir, I may need your assistance. I know that cloud, I have seen it several times before, and can testify to its identity. You will soon see a man and black horse under it." While he was yet speaking, true enough, we began to hear the distant thunder, and soon the chain lightning performed all the figures of a

country dance. About a mile distant, we saw the man and black horse under the cloud; but before he arrived at the toll gate, the thunder cloud had spent itself, and not even a sprinkle fell near us. As the man, whom I instantly knew to be Rugg, attempted to pass, the toll-gatherer swung the gate across the road, seized Rugg's horse by the reins, and demanded two dollars. Feeling some regard for Rugg, I interfered, and began to question the toll-gatherer, and requested him not to be wroth with the man. He replied that he had just cause, for the man had run his toll ten times, and moreover that the horse had discharged a cannon ball at him to the great danger of his life; that the man had always before approached so rapidly that he was too quick for the rusty hinges of the toll gate; but that now he would have full satisfaction. Rugg looked wistfully at me, and said, "I entreat you, sir, to delay me not. I have found at length the direct road to Boston, and shall not reach home to-night if you detain me: you see I am dripping wet, and ought to change my clothes." The toll-gatherer then demanded why he had run his toll

so many times. "Toll!" said Rugg, "why do you demand toll? There is no toll to pay on the King's highway." "King's highway! do you not perceive that this is a turnpike?" "Turnpike! there are no turnpikes in Massachusetts." "That may be, but we have several in Virginia." "Virginia! do you pretend that I am in Virginia?

Rugg then appealed to me, and asked how far it was to Boston. Said I, "Mr. Rugg, I perceive you are bewildered, and am sorry to see you so far from home; you are indeed in Virginia." "You know me then, sir, it seems, and you say I am in Virginia. Give me leave to tell you, sir, that you are the most impudent man alive, for I was never forty miles from Boston, and I never saw a Virginian in my life. This beats Delaware." "Your toll, sir, your toll!" "I will not pay you a penny," said Rugg, you are both of you highway robbers; there are no turnpikes in this country. Take toll on the King's highway! Robbers take toll on the King's highway." Then in a low tone he said, "here is evidently a conspiracy against me; alas! I shall never see Boston! The highways refuse

me a passage, the rivers change their courses, and there is no faith in the compass." But Rugg's horse had no idea of stopping more than one minute, for in the midst of this altercation, the horse, whose nose was resting on the upper bar of the turnpike gate, seized it between his teeth, lifted it gently off its staples, and trotted off with it. The toll-gatherer, confounded, strained his eyes after his gate. "Let him go," said I, "the horse will soon drop your gate, and you will get it again."

I then questioned the toll-gatherer respecting his knowledge of this man, and he related the following particulars: "The first time," said he, "that man ever passed this toll gate was in the year 1806, at the moment of the great eclipse. I thought the horse was frightened at the sudden darkness, and concluded he had run away with the man. But within a few days after, the same man and horse repassed with equal speed, without the least respect to the toll gate or to me, except by a vacant stare. Some few years afterward, during the late war, I saw the same man approaching again, and I resolved to check his

career. Accordingly I stepped into the middle of the road, and stretched wide both my arms, and cried, 'stop sir, on your peril!' At this, the man said, 'now Lightfoot, confound the robber!' At the same time he gave the whip liberally to the flank of his horse, who bounded off with such force that it appeared to me, two such horses, give them a place to stand, would check the diurnal motion of the earth. An ammunition wagon which had just passed on to Baltimore, had dropped an eighteen pounder in the road. This unlucky ball lay in the way of the horse's heels, and the beast, with the sagacity of a demon, clinched it with one of his heels and hurled it behind him. I feel dizzy in relating the fact, but so nearly did the ball pass my head that the wind thereof blew off my hat, and the ball bedded itself in that gate post, as you may see if you will cast your eyes that way. I have permitted it to remain there in memory of the occurrence, as the people of Boston, I am told, preserve an eighteen pounder which is now to be seen half bedded in Brattle Street church."

I then took leave of the toll-gatherer, and promised him if I saw or heard of his gate, I would send him notice.

A strong inclination had possessed me to arrest Rugg; and search his pockets, thinking great discoveries might be made in the examination; but what I saw and heard that day convinced me that no human force could detain Peter Rugg against his consent. I therefore determined if I ever saw Rugg again to treat him in the gentlest manner.

In pursuing my way to New York, I entered on the turnpike in Trenton; and when I arrived at New Brunswick I perceived the road was newly McAdamised. The small stones had just been laid thereon. As I passed this piece of road, I observed at regular distances of about eight feet, the stones entirely displaced from spots as large as the circumference of a half-bushel measure. This singular appearance induced me to inquire the cause of it at the turnpike gate. "Sir," said the toll-gatherer, "I wonder not at the question, but I am unable to give you a satisfactory answer. Indeed, sir, I believe I am bewitched, and that the turnpike is under a

spell of enchantment; for what appeared to me last night cannot be a real transaction, otherwise a turnpike gate is a useless thing." "I do not believe in witchcraft or enchantment," said I, "and if you will relate circumstantially what happened last night, I will endeavor to account for it by natural means." "You may recollect the night was uncommonly dark. Well, sir, just after I had closed the gate for the night, down the turnpike, as far as my eye could reach, I beheld what at first appeared to me, two armies engaged. The report of the musketry, and the flashes of their firelocks were incessant and continuous. As this strange spectacle approached me with the fury of a tornado, the noise increased, and the appearance rolled on in one compact body over the surface of the ground. The most splendid fireworks rose out of the earth and encircled this moving spectacle. In the midst of this luminous configuration sat a man, distinctly to be seen, in a miserable looking chair drawn by a black horse. The divers tints of the rainbow, the most brilliant dyes that the sun lays on the lap of spring, could not display a more beautiful,

radiant and dazzling picture. The turnpike gate, ought by the laws of nature, and the laws of the state, to have made a wreck of the whole, and have dissolved the enchantment; but no, the horse without an effort passed over the gate, and drew the man and chair horizontally after him without touching the bar. This is what I call enchantment—what think you, sir?" "My friend," said I, "you have grossly magnified a natural occurrence. The man was Peter Rugg on his way to Boston. It is true, his horse travelled with unequalled speed, but as he reared high his fore feet, he could not help displacing the small stones on which he trod, which flying in all directions struck each other and resounded and scintillated. The top bar of your gate is not more than two feet from the ground, and Rugg's horse at every vault could easily lift the carriage over that gate." This satisfied Mr. McDoubt, who is a worthy man late from the Highlands, and I was pleased at this, as otherwise he might have added to the calendar of his superstitions. Having thus disenchanted matters, I pursued my journey homeward to New York..

Little did I expect to hear anything further from Mr. Rugg, for he was now more than twelve hours in advance of me. I could hear nothing of him on my way to Elizabethtown. I therefore concluded that during the night he had turned off and pursued a westerly direction. But just before I arrived at Powles's Hook, I observed a considerable collection of passengers in the ferry boat all standing motionless and steadily looking at the same object. One of the ferrymen, Mr. Hardy, who well knew me, observing my approach, delayed a minute in order to afford me a passage, and coming up, said, "Mr. Dunwell, we have got a curiosity on board that would puzzle Dr. Mitchill." "Some strange fish, I suppose, has found its way into the Hudson." "No," said he, "it is a man who looks as if he had lain hid in the ark, and had just now ventured out. He has a little girl with him, the counterpart of himself, and the finest horse you ever saw, harnessed to the queerest looking carriage that ever was made." "Ah, Mr. Hardy," said I, "you have indeed hooked a prize; no one before you could ever detain Peter Rugg long enough to examine

him." "Do you know the man?" said Mr. Hardy. "No, nobody knows him, but everybody has seen him. Detain him as long as possible, delay the boat under any pretence, cut the gear of the horse—do anything to detain him." As I entered the ferry boat, I was struck at the spectacle before me. There indeed, sat Peter Rugg and Jenny Rugg in the chair, and there stood the black horse, all as quiet as lambs, surrounded by more than fifty men and women, who seemed to have lost all senses but one. Not a motion, not a breath, not a rustle. They were all eye. Rugg appeared to them as one not of this world; and they appeared to Rugg as a strange generation. No one spoke, nor was I disposed to disturb the calm, satisfied to reconnoitre Rugg in a state of rest. Presently Rugg observed in a low tone addressed to no one, "a new contrivance, horses instead of oars. Boston folks are full of notions."

It was plain that Rugg was of Dutch extraction. He had on three pair of small clothes, called in former days of simplicity, breeches, not much the worse for wear; but time had proved the fabric and shrunk each

more than the other, so that they discovered at the knees their different qualities and colors. His several waistcoats, the flaps of all which rested on his knees, gave him an appearance rather corpulent. His capacious drab coat would supply the stuff for half a dozen modern ones. The sleeves were like meal bags—in the cuffs you might nurse a child to sleep. His hat, probably once black, now of a tan color, was neither round nor crooked, but much in shape like the one President Monroe wore on his late tour. This dress gave the rotund face of Rugg an antiquated dignity. The man, though deeply sunburnt, did not appear to be more than thirty years of age. He had lost his sad and anxious look, was quite composed, and seemed happy. The chair in which Rugg sat, was very capacious, evidently made for service and calculated to last for ages. The timber would supply material for three modern carriages. This chair, like a Nantucket coach, would answer for everything that ever went on wheels. The horse, too, was an object of curiosity—his majestic height, his glossy mane and tail, gave him a commanding appearance,

and his large open nostrils indicated inexhaustable wind. It was apparent that the hoofs of his fore feet had been split, probably on some newly McAdamised road, and were now growing together again, so that John Spring was not altogether in the wrong.

How long this dumb scene would have continued, I cannot tell. Rugg discovered no sign of impatience. But Rugg's horse having been quiet more than five minutes, had no idea of standing idle; he began to whinny, and a moment after, with his right fore foot, he started a plank. Said Rugg, "my horse is impatient, he sees the North end. You must be quick or he will be ungovernable." At these words the horse raised his left fore foot, and when he laid it down every inch of the ferry boat trembled. Two men immediately seized Rugg's horse by the nostrils. The horse nodded and both of them were in the Hudson. While we were fishing up the men the animal was perfectly quiet. "Fret not the horse," said Rugg, "and he will do no harm. He is only anxious like myself to arrive at yonder beautiful shore. He sees the North Church, and

smells his own stable." "Sir," said I to Rugg, practising a little deception, "pray tell me, for I am a stranger here, what river is this, and what city is that opposite? for you seem to be an inhabitant of it." "This river, sir, is called Mystic River, and this is Winnisimet ferry, we have retained the Indian names, and that town is Boston. You must indeed, be a stranger in these parts not to know that yonder town is Boston, the capital of the New England provinces." "Pray, sir, how long have you been absent from Boston?" "Why that I cannot exactly tell. I lately went with this little girl of mine to Concord to see my friends, and I am ashamed to tell you in returning lost the way and have been travelling ever since. No one would direct me right. It is cruel to mislead a traveller. My horse, Lightfoot, has boxed the compass, and it seems to me has boxed it back again. But sir, you perceive my horse is uneasy. Lightfoot, as yet, has given only a hint and a nod. I cannot be answerable for his heels." At these words Lightfoot raised his long tail and snapped it as you would a whip lash. The Hudson reverberated with the sound.

Instantly the six horses began to move the boat. The Hudson was a sea of glass, without a ripple. The horses from a smart trot soon pressed into a gallop; water now run over the gunwale, and the ferry boat was buried in an ocean of foam. When we arrived at New York, you might see the beautiful white wake of the boat across the Hudson.

Though Rugg refused to pay toll at turnpikes, when Mr. Hardy reached his hand for the ferriage, Rugg readily put his hand into one of his many pockets and took out a piece of silver which he handed to Hardy. "What is this?" said Mr. Hardy. "It is thirty shillings," said Rugg. "It might have once been thirty shillings, old tenor," said Mr. Hardy, "but it is not at present." "The money is good English coin," said Rugg, "my grandfather brought a bag of them from England, and he had them hot from the mint." Hearing this, I approached near to Rugg and asked permission to see the coin. It was a half crown coined by the English Parliament dated in the year 1649. On one side "*The Commonwealth of England*," and St. George's

cross encircled with a wreath of laurel. On the other, "*God with us*," and a harp and St. George's cross united. I winked to Mr. Hardy and pronounced it good, current money; and said loudly, I would not permit the gentleman to be imposed on, for I would exchange the money myself. On this, Rugg spoke, "please to give me your name, sir." "My name is Dunwell, sir," I replied. "Mr. Dunwell," said Rugg, "you are the only honest man I have seen since I left Boston. As you are a stranger here, my house is your home; dame Rugg will be happy to see her husband's friend. Step into my chair, sir, there is room enough; move a little, Jenny, for the gentleman, and we will be in Middle Street in a minute." Accordingly I took a seat by Peter Rugg. "Were you never in Boston before?" said Rugg, "No," said I. "Well, you will now see the queen of New England, a town second only to Philadelphia in all North America." "You forget New York," said I. "Poh, New York is nothing. Though I never was there, I am told you might put all New York in our Mill Pond. No, sir, New York I assure you is but a sorry

affair, no more to be compared to Boston than a wigwam to a palace.

As Rugg's horse turned into Pearl Street, I looked him as full in the face as good manners would allow, and said, "sir, if this is Boston, I acknowledge New York is not worthy to to be one of its suburbs." Before we had proceeded far, Rugg's countenance changed, he began to twitter under the ears, his eyes trembled in their sockets, he was evidently bewildered. "What is the matter, Mr. Rugg? you seem disturbed." "This surpasses all human comprehension. If you know, sir, where we are, I beseech you to tell me." "If this place," I replied, "is not Boston, it must be New York." "No, sir, it is not Boston; nor can it be New York. How could I be in New York which is nearly two hundred miles from Boston?" By this time we had passed into Broadway, and then Rugg, in truth, discovered a chaotic mind. "There is no such place as this in North America, this is all the effect of enchantment; this is a grand delusion, nothing real; here is seemingly a great city, magnificient houses, shops and goods, men and women innumerable,

and as busy as real life, all sprung up in one night from the wilderness. Or what is more probable, some tremendous convulsion of nature has thrown London or Amsterdam on the shores of New England. Or possibly I may be dreaming, though the night seems rather long, but before now I have sailed in one night to Amsterdam, bought goods of Vandogger, and returned to Boston before morning." At this moment a hue and cry was heard, "stop the madmen, they will endanger the lives of thousands!" In vain hundreds attempted to stop Rugg's horse; Lightfoot interfered with nothing, his course was straight as a shooting star. But on my part, fearful that before night I should find myself behind the Alleghanies, I addressed Mr. Rugg in a tone of entreaty, and requested him to restrain the horse and permit me to alight. "My friend," said he, "we shall be in Boston before dark, and dame Rugg will be most exceeding glad to see us." "Mr. Rugg," said I, "you must excuse me. Pray look to the west and see that thunder cloud swelling with rage as if in pursuit of us." "Ah," said Rugg, "it is all in vain to attempt to escape.

I know that cloud, it is collecting new wrath to spend on my head." Then checking his horse he permitted me to descend, saying, "farewell, Mr. Dunwell, I shall be happy to see you in Boston, I live in Middle Street."

It is uncertain in what direction Mr. Rugg pursued his course after he disappeared in Broadway; but one thing is sufficiently known to everybody, that in the course of two months after he was seen in New York, he found his way most opportunely to Boston.

It seems that the estate of Peter Rugg had recently escheated to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for want of heirs, and the legislature had ordered the Solicitor General to advertise and sell it at public auction. Happening to be in Boston at the time, and observing his advertisement, I felt a kindly curiosity to see the spot where Rugg once lived. Taking the advertisement in my hand I wandered a little way down Middle Street, and without asking a question of any one, when I came to a certain spot I said to myself, "this is Rugg's estate, I will proceed no further; this must be the spot, it is a counterpart of Peter Rugg." The premises, in-

deed, looked as if they had accomplished a sad prophesy. Fronting on Middle Street, they extended in the rear to Ann Street, and embraced about half an acre of land. It was not uncommon in former times to have half an acre for a house lot, for an acre of land then, in many parts of Boston, was not more valuable than a foot in some places at present. The old mansion house had become powder-post, and been blown away. One other building, uninhabited, stood ominous courting dilapidation. The street had been so much raised that the bed chamber had descended to the kitchen and was level with the street. The house seemed conscious of its fate, and as though tired of standing there the front was fast retreating from the rear, and waiting the next south wind to project itself into the street. If the most wary animals had sought a place of refuge, here they would have rendezvoused. Here under the ridge pole the crow could have perched in safety, and in the recesses below you might have caught the fox and weazel asleep. "The hand of destiny," said I, "has pressed heavily on this spot; still heavier on the former

owners. Strange that so large a lot of land as this should want an heir! Yet Peter Rugg at this day might pass his own door stone and ask, 'who once lived here?' "

The auctioneer appointed by the Solicitor to sell this estate, was a man of eloquence as many of the auctioneers of Boston are. The occasion seemed to warrant, and his duty urged him to make a display. He addressed his audience as follows. "The estate, gentlemen, which we offer you this day, was once the property of a family now extinct. It has escheated to the Commonwealth for want of heirs. Lest any one of you should be deterred from bidding on so large an estate as this, for fear of a disputed title, I am authorized by the Solicitor General to proclaim that the purchaser shall have the best of all titles, a warranty deed from the Commonwealth. I state this, gentlemen, because I know there is an idle rumor in this vicinity, that one Peter Rugg, the original owner of this estate, is still living. This rumor, gentlemen, has no foundation in the nature of things. It originated, about two years since, from the incredible story of one Jonathan Dunwell of

New York. Mrs. Croft, indeed, whose husband I see present, and whose mouth waters for this estate, has countenanced this fiction. But, gentlemen, was it ever known that any estate, especially an estate of this value, lay unclaimed for nearly half a century, if an heir ever so remote was existing? For, gentlemen, all agree that old Peter Rugg, if living, would be at least one hundred years of age. It is said he and his daughter with a horse and chaise were missed more than half a century ago, and because they never returned home, forsooth, they must be now living, and will, some day, come and claim this great estate. Such logic, gentlemen, never led to a good investment. Let not this idle story cross the noble purpose of consigning these ruins to the genius of architecture. If such a contingency could check the spirit of enterprise, farewell to all mercantile excitement. Your surplus money, instead of refreshing your sleep with the golden dreams of new sources of speculation, would turn to the nightmare. A man's money, if not employed serves only to disturb his rest. Look, then, to the prospect before you. Here is half an

acre of land, more than twenty thousand square feet, a corner lot with wonderful capabilities; none of your contracted lots of forty feet by fifty, where in dog days you can breathe only through your scuttles. On the contrary, an architect cannot contemplate this extensive lot without rapture, for here is room enough for his genius to shame the temple of Solomon. Then the prospect, how commanding! To the east, so near the Atlantic, that Neptune freighted with the select treasures of the whole earth can knock at your door with his trident. From the west all the produce of the river of Paradise, the Connecticut, will soon, by the blessings of steam railways and canals, pass under your windows; and thus, on this spot, Neptune shall marry Ceres, and Pomona from Roxbury and Flora from Cambridge shall dance at the wedding.

"Gentlemen of science, men of taste, ye of the Literary Emporium, for I perceive many of you present, to you this is holy ground. If the spot over which in times past, a hero left the print of a footstep is now sacred, of what price is the birthplace of one who all

the world knows was born in Middle Street, directly opposite this lot; and who, if his birthplace was not well known, would now be claimed by more than seven cities. To you, then, the value of these premises must be inestimable. For, ere long, there will rise in front view of the edifice to be erected here, a monument, the wonder and veneration of the world. A column shall spring to the clouds, and on that column will be engraven one word that will convey all that is wise in intellect, useful in science, good in morals, prudent in counsel, and benevolent in principle; a name when living, the patron of the poor, the delight of the cottage, and the admiration of kings; now dead, worth the whole seven wise men of Greece. Need I tell you his name? He fixed the thunder and guided the lightning!

"Men of the North End! Need I appeal to your patriotism in order to enhance the value of this lot? The earth affords no such scenery as this. There, around that corner, lived James Otis; here, Samuel Adams—there, Joseph Warren—and around that other corner, Josiah Quincy. Here was the birth-

place of Freedom; here, Liberty was born, nursed and grew to manhood. Here, man was new created. Here is the nursery of American Independence—I am too modest—here commenced the emancipation of the world. A thousand generations hence, millions of men will cross the Atlantic just to look at the North End of Boston. Your fathers,—what do I say? yourselves, yes, this moment I behold several attending this auction who lent a hand to rock the cradle of Independence.

"Men of speculation! Ye who are deaf to everything except the sound of money, you I know, will give me both of your ears when I tell you the city of Boston must have a piece of this estate in order to widen Ann Street. Do you hear me? do you all hear me? I say the city must have a large piece of this land in order to widen Ann Street. What a chance! The city scorns to take a man's land for nothing. If they seize your property, they are generous beyond the dreams of avarice. The only oppression is, you are in danger of being smothered under a load of wealth. Witness the old lady who

lately died of a broken heart when the Mayor paid her for a piece of her kitchen garden. All the faculty agreed that the sight of the treasure, which the Mayor incautiously paid her in dazzling dollars warm from the mint, sped joyfully all the blood of her body into her heart, and rent it in raptures. Therefore let him who purchases the estate fear his good fortune, and not Peter Rugg. Bid then liberally, and do not let the name of Rugg damp your ardor. How much will you give per foot for this estate?" Thus spoke the auctioneer, and gracefully waved his ivory hammer. From fifty to seventy-five cents per foot were offered in a few moments. It labored from seventy-five to ninety. At length one dollar was offered. The auctioneer seemed satisfied, and looking at his watch said he would knock off the estate in five minutes if no one offered more. There was a deep silence during this short period. While the hammer was suspended a strange rumbling noise was heard which arrested the attention of every one. Presently it was like the sound of many shipwrights driving home the bolts of a seventy-four. As the sound

approached nearer, some exclaimed, "the buildings in the new market are falling." Others said, "no, it is an earthquake, we can perceive the earth joggle." Others said, "not so, the sound proceeds from Hanover Street, and approaches nearer." This proved true, for presently Peter Rugg was in the midst of us.

"Alas, Jenny," said Peter, "I am ruined; our house has been burnt, and here are all our neighbors around the ruins. Heaven grant that your mother dame Rugg is safe." "They don't look like our neighbors," said Jenny, "but sure enough our house is burnt, and nothing left but the door stone and an old cedar post—do ask where mother is."

In the meantime more than a thousand men had surrounded Rugg and his horse and chair; yet neither Rugg personally, nor his horse and carriage attracted more attention than the auctioneer. The confident look and searching eye of Rugg, to every one present, carried more conviction that the estate was his, than could any parchment or paper with signature and seal. The impression which the auctioneer had just made on the company

was effaced in a moment: and although the latter words of the auctioneer were "fear not Peter Rugg," the moment he met the eye of Rugg his occupation was gone, his arm fell down to his hip, his late lively hammer hung heavy in his hand, and the auction was forgotten. The black horse, too, gave his evidence. He knew his journey was ended, for he stretched himself into a horse and a half, rested his cheek bone over the cedar post, and whinneyed thrice, causing his harness to tremble from headstall to crupper. Rugg then stood upright in his chair, and asked with some authority, "who has demolished my house in my absence? for I see no signs of a conflagration. I demand to know by what accident this has happened, and wherefore this collection of strange people has assembled before my door stone. I thought I knew every man in Boston, but you appear to me a new generation. Yet I am familiar with many of the countenances here present, and I can call some of you by name; but in truth I do not recollect that before this moment, I ever saw any one of you. There, I am certain, is a Winslow, and here a Sargent;

there stands a Sewall, and next to him a Dudley. Will none of you speak to me? Or is this a delusion? I see, indeed, many forms of men, and no want of eyes, but of motion, speech and hearing you seem to be destitute. Strange! will no one inform me who has demolished my house?" Then spake a voice from the crowd, but from whom it came I could not discover: "There is nothing strange here but yourself, Mr. Rugg. Time, which destroys and renews all things, has dilapidated your house, and brought us here. You have suffered many years under an illusion. The tempest which you profanely defied at Menotomy has at length subsided; but you will never see home, for your house and wife and neighbors have all disappeared. Your estate, indeed, remains, but no home. You were cut off from the last age, and you never can be fitted to the present. Your home is gone, and you can never have another home in this world."

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